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William Kendall
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WILLIAM KENDALL - RECENT PAINTINGS



Southern Storm, 1995. Acrylic and chalk on canvas. 84" x 72" William Kendall

Recently, William Kendall, Professor of Art at Bridgewater State College, had a one-man show of his recent paintings at the Anderson Gallery. The following is an interview, conducted by Professor Wayne Phillips, about Kendall's work.

How would you describe your type of painting, and what is it about?

I suppose that one would say I'm an Abstract Expressionist; I always have been. I think in terms of abstraction. The subject is really the paint itself – I am totally involved in what can be done on the canvas by the manipulation of paint. I'm dealing with the power of color, the richness of texture created by the complicated layering of impasto, scumbles, and glazes. I try to keep pushing the paint – to make things happen in spontaneous ways; I use combinations I've never used before, to see if they can function as a whole. Each time I begin a painting I am curious myself, to see what will be created – and it is always a surprise.



Easter Sunday, 1995. Acrylic on canvas. 35" x 48" William Kendall

To the untrained eye, one might think that your type of painting is easy to execute.

That perhaps, is true. To really understand painting, one must know the underlying principles, and above all, one must have a knowledge of the history of painting.

What does the history of painting have to do with abstract art?

Everything. My work is a distillation of all the artists that have come before me, especially the great masters – I learn from them. Matisse, for example, his work is fresh, not overworked – I try to get that feeling in my painting.



Baker's Beach, 1995. Acrylic on canvas. 25" x 27" William Kendall

Who are two of your favorite artists?

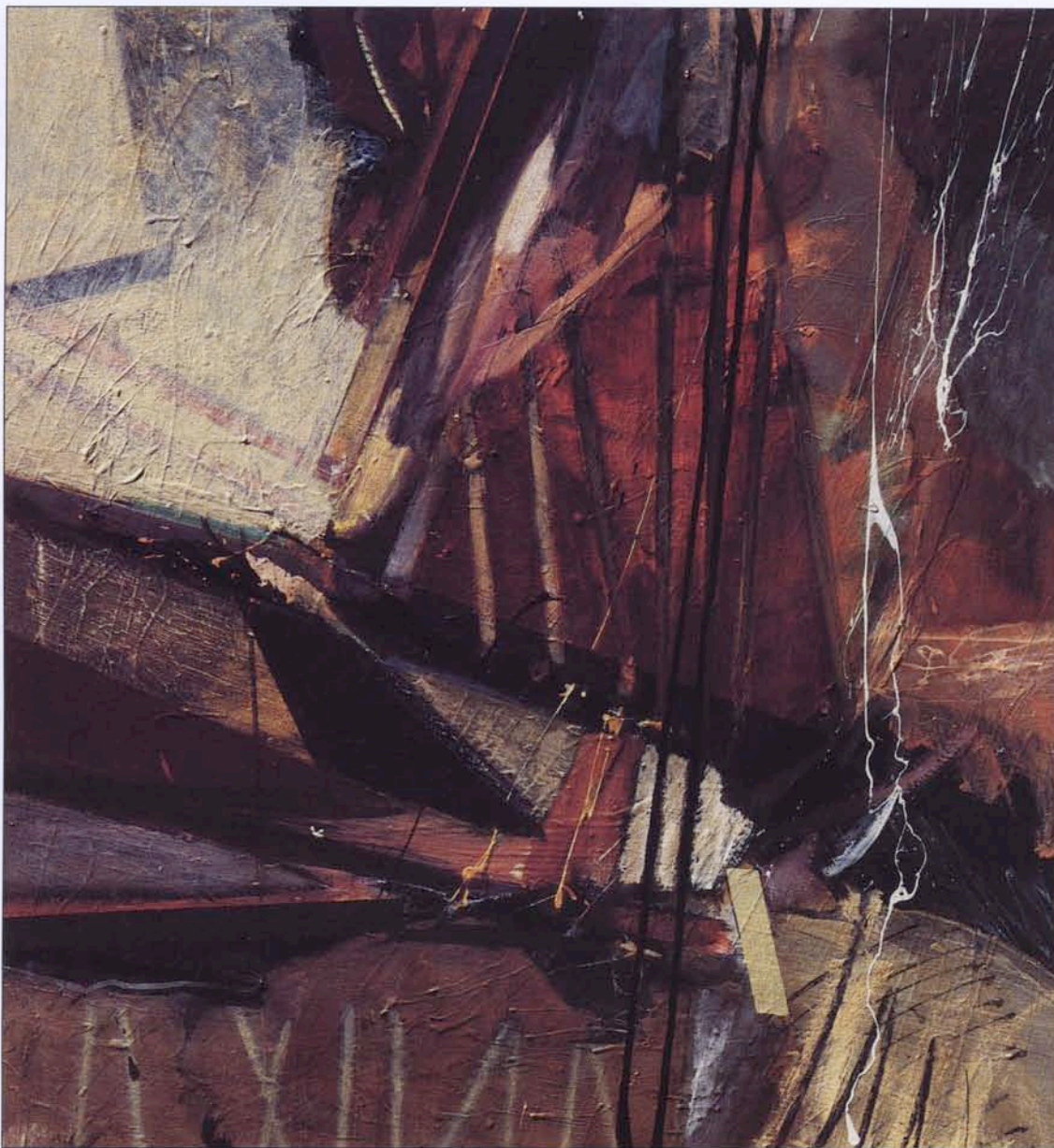
Cezanne and Cezanne.

Why is Cezanne so important to you?

My real painting began when I understood Cezanne's work. I found myself, not looking at the subject matter, but at the paint strokes. That's the first time I understood abstraction; I knew then that that was what I wanted to do.

Your paintings seem to have a great deal of action – a certain robust quality almost Baroque in feeling. What do you think was your inspiration?

Definitely my travels to Italy; I remember the exact moment – standing in Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venice, looking up at the work of Tintoretto. I felt an energy – the movement of color and forms through space – that was very exciting to me.



Sunset Sailing, 1995. Acrylic on canvas. 34" x 46" William Kendall

Is that when you started to paint on larger canvases?

Exactly. I returned home and immediately began work on a grand scale. I found that the large size enabled me to get more action with the paint. I like to come up to the large work and see the nuances in the paint surface.

Do you enjoy painting?

Many people paint for enjoyment and relaxation – which is great for them, but for me painting is one of the most difficult things to accomplish. As John Graham (artisticritic and theorist) once said, "Starting a painting is starting an argument in terms of canvas and paint." It seems I'm always in the middle of an argument.

